Posted by u/SidewalkToronto 1 year ago

0

We're on the Sidewalk Toronto planning team. Ask us anything about the Quayside plans and public spaces (Aug 20, 11 AM - Noon).

Discussion

Released in June after 18 months of planning work and public input, our *Toronto Tomorrow* proposal outlines a new approach for inclusive growth along the city's eastern waterfront.

On **Tuesday, August 20, from 11 a.m. to 12 noon ET**, Andrew Winters (COO for Development) and Jesse Shapins (Director of Public Realm) will answer your questions about the Quayside neighbourhood plans and public spaces, joined by Editorial Director Eric Jaffe (lead writer for the proposal).

The Quayside plan outlines a diverse live-work community. Quayside would be home to more than 3,900 jobs, with roughly a third of the site devoted to non-residential uses, encouraging a mix of office, retail, maker, and community spaces along the ground floors. The plan calls for roughly 2,600 residential units, including 40% of units (roughly 1,000) at below-market rates. You can read more about the Quayside plan here.

Quayside's public spaces are rooted in strong placemaking principles, designed to connect the community through more types of parks and open spaces that are usable more of the time. They incorporate a range of innovations to help bring people together outdoors, including pedestrian-friendly street designs, shared community programming tools, and weather-mitigation technology. You can read more about the public realm vision here.

We look forward to answering your questions!

Proof: https://twitter.com/sidewalklabs/status/1163483361303830533

You can read previous AMAs on the overall project, digital governance, affordable housing, and sustainable energy / transport here. Our final AMA will focus on the partnership proposal and business model (Aug 27).

The AMA sessions are an opportunity for Sidewalk to answer questions and clarify aspects of our proposal — but they aren't part of Waterfront Toronto's public consultation process. You can read more about that process here.

[UPDATED] We're signing off at 12:05. Thanks to everyone who keeps asking great questions and engaging with our proposal.

55 Comments Share Save Hide Report 47% Upvoted

u/VIPCasino · PROMOTED

Looking for a new online casino? Start playing today at Canada's best new casino site - VIPCasino. Get up to $250 casino bonus when you make your first deposit!

https://www.vipcasino.ca

This thread is archived
New comments cannot be posted and votes cannot be cast

SORT BY **BEST**

6ixtdot416 1 year ago

What are the 3 public realm innovations that you think will have the biggest impact on Torontonians?

Side question off-topic: What is the justification for Toronto receiving 10% of profits for 10 years?

Why not 100+ years and really show you want to partner with Toronto to improve the city.

15 Share Report Save

6ixtdot416 1 year ago

Question 2:

How do you plan to partner with the City of Toronto when it comes to new digital platforms such as Seed Space, Collab and CommonSpace? Who has responsibility and ownership short term and long term?

Thanks!

2 Share Report Save

Continue this thread →

SidewalkToronto 1 year ago

(Jesse here.) Thanks for joining the conversation. That's a great question. First and foremost, I think the public realm plan itself will have a dramatic impact on Torontonians by providing greater opportunities for people to connect with each other. What we've proposed for naturalizing Parliament Slip, creating a floating amphitheatre at Parliament Cove, a great new park at Silo Park, and a year-round plaza at Parliament Plaza will create great public spaces on the waterfront. These spaces really build on the great work of Waterfront Toronto to date, and push farther, really bringing people directly down to the lake, incorporating industrial heritage structures, and building public space directly into buildings. You can read more about this all in this blog post.

On top of this foundation, there are some innovations I think that can be really impactful. While I'm hesitant to limit myself to three, here goes:

1. **Modular pavement** is one of the things I'm super excited about. We know that, right now, streets are built with rigid pavement that makes street work very disruptive and costly. Based on pavement technology proven in Nantes, France, we're prototyping a type of modular pavement that can be quickly and easily removed for utility channel access, limiting street disruption. This pavement can also be embedded with heating to melt snow (improving accessibility for the elderly and children), and with lighting to indicate new uses (expanding the amount of time a curb area can be used for public space). We can also make the pavement permeable to improve stormwater management. You can read more about modular pavement on Pages 136-139 in the public realm chapter. You can also stop by our Toronto innovation space at 307 Lake Shore Boulevard E to see a pilot!
2. **Outdoor-comfort systems** are another innovation with a great opportunity to improve quality of life. We've developed these in close collaboration with Toronto-based climate engineers RWDI and Toronto architecture firm PARTISANS. These systems include things like Building Raincoats, which extend out from a building to provide coverage on rainy or snowy days. These Raincoats are made from translucent ETFE material, which means they can also provide shade on very hot days. Other parts of the system include heated pavement, and deployable shelters that provide coverage from rain, wind, or snow to larger groups of people. We think this system can expand the number of hours it's comfortable outside by 35% a year. You can read more about outdoor-comfort systems on Pages 167-177.
3. **Shared community programming tools** is the third innovation I'll highlight. The most vibrant public spaces are the ones that people have a direct role in creating. You see that in Toronto all the time, in places like Dufferin Grove Park, where community groups have shaped the park for years. Ultimately, technology alone will never build community, we do think certain technologies can help create greater programming opportunities and community control. Some of the tools for community baked in from the start and accessible to everyone: things like projectors and lighting for art installations, or speakers for dance groups, or public WiFi for group classes. You can read more about this on Pages 182-185.

(Eric on the second question.) We have proposed the 10% profit-sharing for innovations that emerged through the unique opportunities of this project, because we believe it's only right and fair for the public sector to share in the value it's helped to create. We think this is a first-of-its-kind arrangement, and an innovative approach for the public and private sectors to work together. Of course, we look forward to discussing the exact nature of the arrangement with Waterfront Toronto as the proposal is considered.

I'd encourage you to join next week's AMA (Aug 27, 1 PM), which will get into the details of the partnership proposal.

3 Share Report Save

darkgreenandsilver High Park 1 year ago

Will we be able to opt out of all data mining that sidewalk labs and any of its partners will be collecting?

What kind of info will sidewalk labs specifically be collecting on civilians and how?

13 Share Report Save

SidewalkToronto 1 year ago

(Eric and Jesse here.) We'd encourage you to check out the previous AMA on data and digital governance for more details. But we'll do our best to provide answers here.

First, as mentioned in an earlier question, your question implies we intend to surveil civilians, which is just not true. We strongly believe some data can help improve many aspects of urban life -- making intersections safer and buildings more energy-efficient, for example -- but we are not a data company. We will not sell personal information, nor use it for advertising, nor share it with third parties (including Alphabet companies) without explicit consent.

Instead, we plan to make money through traditional real estate development, urban innovations (some of which are digital but many of which are not, such as modular pavement), and financing much-needed infrastructure.

There is this idea out there that somehow walking into this neighbourhood means you'll be tracked, and all of this personal data about you will be collected. This is not true. As for opting-out, walking into this neighbourhood in terms of personal data collection will not be different from other parts of the city. In fact, in many ways, this neighbourhood will likely have stronger protections around surveillance and privacy than other places, as it is so fundamental to how we approach planning and digital governance. For example, facial recognition is not at all proposed and any data collection would require approval of the government-sanctioned Urban Data Trust. Ensuring that everyone knows they can gather in Quayside in the same ways they can in any other part of the city is essential. We recognize privacy as a fundamental right, a precondition to freedom of assembly, freedom of religion, and other fundamental human rights.

Importantly, current privacy laws allow organizations to obtain "consent" for personal information collected in public spaces via signage placed near a device (think CCTV cameras). But many companies don't adhere to this practice — and even when they do, such signage often lacks information about why the data is being collected or how it's being protected. We think there's a need for additional protections, which is why we've proposed that all digital innovations would need to be approved by an independent entity to help ensure they truly have a public benefit (not used for things like tracking or surveillance) and greater transparency.

To your second question, as also mentioned earlier, you can see a list of proposal digital innovations (including the types of data they might collect) on Pages 444-447 of the Digital Innovation chapter. You'll see that most of the data is not personal information at all, but rather non-personal or aggregated data (such as air quality or building energy use). Personal information would be de-identified by default.

2 Share Report Save

Continue this thread →

my002 1 year ago

1. The MIDP states that "Urban data would . . . include personal, non-personal, aggregate, or de-identified data . . . collected and used in physical or community spaces **where meaningful consent prior to collection and use is hard, if not impossible, to obtain**" (415 emphasis added). What solution do you propose to implement at the level of collection to the problem highlighted above (ie. the fact that consent to the collection of data collected from individuals in public spaces is hard, if not impossible to obtain)? Do you plan to allow individuals to opt out of having any urban data (including non-personal, aggregate, and de-identified data) collected about them when they inhabit public spaces in the Quayside? If so, how do you propose to ensure that data is not collected on individuals who wish to opt out of having their data collected?
2. If you do not plan to offer individuals in public spaces a way of opting out of being part of aggregated data pools and/or having their data used, what specific methods are you planning to use to prevent the de-identification of any data collected on individuals in public spaces?
3. Sidewalk labs has committed to acting as the lead developer on Quayside. Why should Sidewalk Labs, which to my knowledge has zero experience in real estate or development projects, be the lead developer? Would it not make more sense to have Waterfront Toronto choose a lead developer based on a competitive public procurement process?
4. What would happen to your proposals if Sidewalk Labs is not given lead developer status?

8 Share Report Save

SidewalkToronto 1 year ago

All great questions. Thank you for engaging closely with the material. Although we are not part of the data and digital governance teams, we will try to provide some helpful answers. We'd refer you to the previous Data AMA for more information.

On 1 and 2 (Eric and Jesse here): Off the bat, as we said earlier in the chat, walking into this neighbourhood in terms of personal data collection will not be different from other parts of the city.

Again, we think there's a need for additional protections, which is why we've proposed that all digital innovations would need to be approved by an independent entity to help ensure they truly have a public benefit (not used for things like tracking or surveillance) and greater transparency.

To help this transparency, we've started a program on Digital Transparency in the Public Realm, to develop easy-to-understand icons about data collected in public spaces.

We also propose for all such devices to be registered and searchable on a public map, along with the summaries of how they intend to use data and the sources of that data.

We presume for your second question you are asking about re-identification. This is an important point. We've committed to de-identifying data by default and to using a minimal amount of data to achieve a specific benefit. (We've also proposed that the independent Urban Data Trust entity adopt a similar rule for all other parties.) De-identified data is information that was potentially identifiable when collected but has subsequently been made non-identifiable, such as a traffic camera that converts a video of a car into a count of "one car" and deletes the image.

We do recognize the potential for re-identification, and to protect against this, the Responsible Data Use process we propose for Quayside — and that we personally commit to following as a company — evaluates the risk of re-identification. This would also be an important responsibility for the Urban Data Trust.

(Eric and Andrew here.) On 3 and 4: To clarify, we have proposed to be lead developer -- with local partners -- on Quayside. Sidewalk Labs is filled with career urbanists, public servants, and real estate developers who have done large-scale projects all over the world, including in New York City (where we're based) and in Toronto.

In New York, those development projects include:

- The transformation of Manhattan's Far West Side, unlocked by the innovative financing approach that sparked the city's first subway expansion in 25 years
- The redevelopment of an unused elevated freight track into the celebrated High Line park
- The creation or preservation of 165,000 units of affordable housing across the city
- The development of Cornell Tech, a sustainable academic campus focused on technology and entrepreneurship

Our Toronto-based team has played a role in Toronto's West Don Lands and East Bayfront developments, the Bentway park beneath the Gardiner Expressway, the Evergreen Brick Works site, the Eglinton Crosstown rapid transit line, and many other innovative projects. This team has also worked closely with every public-sector development agency, including CreateTO, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, and Infrastructure Ontario.

The innovative systems that we are proposing are not currently supported by market economics. That's the key reason we feel we need to take the lead in the Quayside development. However, we would be working with local development partners to deliver the project, achieve the priority outcomes identified by Waterfront Toronto, and to demonstrate there's a path forward here for others.

We believe we've proposed a fair transaction, which includes us being lead developer (with partners) in Quayside, and we look forward to continued discussions with Waterfront Toronto and government on the merits of these proposals.

We'd encourage you to join next week's AMA on the proposed partnership (Aug 27, 1 PM).

-1 Share Report Save

Continue this thread →

gammadeltat <3 Celine Dion <3 1 year ago · *edited 1 year ago*

Hiyas, thanks for engaging with us again.

I have a number of questions I hope you guys can address.

1. How do you come up with the estimates for the jobs. Is it just because there is space for them? How can you ensure diversity in the mix of the kinds of industries that come into the neighbourhood? Is there a formal selection process?
2. I noticed there is an allotment for an elementary school but not a secondary school. Will the secondary schools in the surrounding area be able to handle the load of the buildup of this community?
3. There are concerns about personal data tracking in community spaces of the neighbourhood. What kinds of data would be collected from people who just come to use some of the amenities/community spaces?
4. Will retail just be dominated by big players who can afford it like Shoppers/Rexall as we are seeing all over downtown? Is there an allotment of space for lower-income/independent commercial spaces like there is for affordable housing?
5. What will happen if there is no demand for usage of the commercial spaces?
6. How is the space designed for utility in Winter?

11 Share Report Save

SidewalkToronto 1 year ago

Thanks for your questions. We'll take them in order with separate replies.

(Andrew here.) 1. On the jobs estimates, these figures were provided by a third-party analysis from a Toronto-based firm called urbanMetrics. In brief, urbanMetrics compared the economic impact of our development proposal to development that would likely occur given existing planning trends. For example, our Quayside plan includes significantly more space than usual for non-residential uses (such as offices, retailers, and community spaces), which in turn helps to create jobs. We strive to ensure diversity through things like programs for small businesses and a community benefits approach that includes construction workforce programs. In all, the estimates found that Quayside would be home to more than 3,900 jobs.

You can read more in the Economic Development chapter; we've also posted the link to their full report in our Documents page.

1 Share Report Save

Continue this thread →

nastus 1 year ago

How competitive will pricing be for homes built under this project?

8 Share Report Save

SidewalkToronto 1 year ago

(Andrew here.) Thanks for the question. Housing affordability is probably the biggest challenge facing Toronto right now. To help address that problem in Quayside, we've proposed a housing program that includes 40% below-market housing.

That includes 20% of units for traditional affordable housing (at least a quarter of which would go toward "deep" affordability needs), and 20% of units would be for middle-income households that don't quality for affordable housing but still can't afford market home prices.

Of these middle-income units, a portion would offer a new type of affordable ownership option called shared equity, which enables a household to pay a smaller down-payment on a portion of a home and pay rent on the rest. That provides a pathway to gaining some equity upon selling a home without the burden of a huge down-payment.

Finally, to improve long-term affordability for the city, 50% of all units in Quayside will be purpose-built rentals.

I'd encourage you to see the earlier housing AMA for more details.

3 Share Report Save

Continue this thread →

A_Greasy Koreatown 1 year ago

Can we downvote these unethical data farmers?

17 Share Report Save

TorontoMon22 Parkwoods 1 year ago

100% Farm fresh, organic data on your entire life collected, and stored in Alphabets giant cylos.

3 Share Report Save

Comment deleted by user 1 year ago

gammadeltat <3 Celine Dion <3 1 year ago · *edited 1 year ago*

Because SidewalkTO is a huge project that the city of Toronto is considering. Because their MIDP is over 1000 pages and isn't the most digestible for everyday people. Because we asked them to put themselves out here so that this group of Torontonians could ask them productive questions.

Look, despite your dislike of the project. It's a great opportunity for you to learn about the itty gritty of it so you can understand exactly why you dislike it or perhaps change your mind. This is so some people (r/Toronto) could be better informed. Arguably, the first AMA with the CEO is almost purely an exercise in PR. But Sidewalk Labs offered all these other AMAs so that we could gain insights into the particulars of the project with the subject matter experts who understand the details.

It's incredibly difficult to get corporate people/other larger stakeholders to come onto a venue like this to discuss questions from a random audience. Why don't you ask productive questions about the things you specifically dislike that maybe the Sidewalk Toronto planning team can address. That way you get it right from the horse's mouth. Maybe your concerns are valid and Sidewalk has no good answer to appease you. But there's no need for comments like this. The fact that they are willing to engage with us at this level is lucky for us. So thanks for comments like this which make it harder for us to get AMAs.

18 Share Report Save

Continue this thread →

DonJulioTO Silverthorn 1 year ago

I couldn't agree more.

8 Share Report Save

SidewalkToronto 1 year ago

(Eric here.) Sorry you feel you're being spammed. As we noted last week, that's not our intention at all. On the contrary, we know Toronto Tomorrow is a very long plan and quite technical at times, with the potential to have a significant impact on the city's development.

For those reasons, we feel it's important to be available to answer questions from engaged community members such as those in r/Toronto, and we've worked with the mods to design a series of AMAs to provide multiple opportunities for discussion on a variety of areas. We want you to ask us the tough questions on your mind, and hope you'll engage with the material to do so.

3 Share Report Save

chooseusernameeeeeee 1 year ago

What are some of the top findings/learnings you have made from all the public consultations and AMAs? Is there anything that has really stuck out to you guys so far?

3 Share Report Save

SidewalkToronto 1 year ago

(Eric here.) Wonderful question. Thank you! We engaged with more than 21,000 Torontonians in person over 18 months, and many more online, to help develop and improve our proposal. We sorted through all this feedback and identified 7 primary themes that emerged.

These included (1) focus on quality-of-life outcomes such as sustainability, affordability, mobility, and economic opportunity; (2) be inclusive for ALL; (3) avoid tech for tech's sake -- any technology must be put in the service of improving people's lives; (4) ensure the public sector has a leading role in this project; (5) prove ourselves by advancing this project in stages; (6) build on the great work already happening in Toronto and along the waterfront; and (7) provide a transparent business model (there's another AMA all about this next week, Aug 27 at 1 PM).

You can read more about these themes (and how we responded to them) in this summary document of our public engagement program.

(Jesse here.) I'd also like to note that our plans for the public realm and inclusive urban design were driven largely by research conducted with Park People and Doblin. This work engaged Torontonians across the city (many of whom are not normally included in public consultations) and produced 6 main lessons.

These are (1) people want to help shape their public spaces, like their living rooms, (2) people crave face-to-face interactions, (3) people want to be surprised and delighted by public spaces, (4) urban design should provide a full range of sensory experiences, not just sight, (5) good public spaces set positive rules for co-creation and use, and (6) good public spaces help us slow down from the pace of everyday life.

You can read more about this work on Pages 124-125 of the public realm chapter, or in the "North of the Water" report itself, which we posted on our Documents page.

4 Share Report Save

TurbulentArtist 1 year ago

are you going to pay me to live in your neighbourhood?

10 Share Report Save

SidewalkToronto 1 year ago

Afraid not -- but hopefully we've created enough affordable options (as mentioned to user nastus) for you to still live there anyway!

0 Share Report Save

Continue this thread →

dalewood12 1 year ago

Mods, these Google Sidewalk Labs AMAs are getting out of hand. How many do they need? Given the amount of lobbying they're doing, they don't need much more help.

4 Share Report Save

gammadeltat <3 Celine Dion <3 1 year ago

https://www.reddit.com/r/toronto/comments/csj7zs/were_on_the_sidewalk_toronto_planning_team_ask_us/exfcuk3/

https://www.reddit.com/r/toronto/comments/csj7zs/were_on_the_sidewalk_toronto_planning_team_ask_us/exfelzd/

1 Share Report Save

gustofathousandwinds 1 year ago

When will you submit an application?

3 Share Report Save

SidewalkToronto 1 year ago

We submitted our proposal to Waterfront Toronto and government for consideration in late June. They will continue to evaluate it and also conduct additional public consultations as necessary. There's a link to those in the original thread post.

2 Share Report Save

More posts from the toronto community

r/toronto

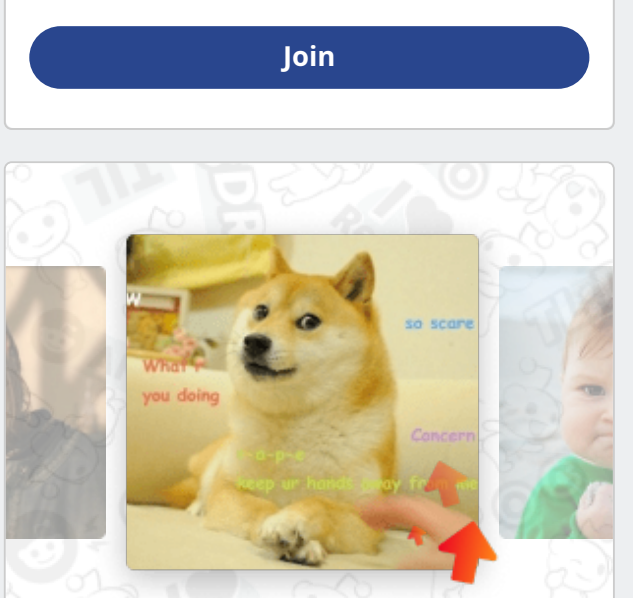
News, People, Places, Events, Articles, and Discussions on Toronto; Canada's Business and Financial capital, and the Provincial capital of Ontario.

347k Torontonians

3.1k Online

Created May 27, 2008

Join



TOP POSTS AUGUST 19TH 2019

TOP POSTS OF AUGUST, 2019

TOP POSTS 2019

Reddit Inc © 2021. All rights reserved

Back to Top

Continue browsing in r/toronto →